A

LETTER

From the Rev. Mr *Whitefield* from Georgia, to a Friend in *London*, shewing the

Fundamental *ERROR*

OF A

BOOK,

ENTITULED

The Whole Duty of Man.

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A Letter from the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, *to a Friend in* London, *shewing the Fundamental Error of a Book, entituled,* The Whole Duty of Man.

My dear Friend,

SINCE it has pleased God to give me a true Knowledge of the Doctrines of Grace, I have frequently thought, that next to the falling away of the Clergy from the Principles of the Reformation, the Books which are in our Church founded on the *Arminian* Scheme, have been the chief Cause why so many of our own Communion in particular, have built their Hopes of Salvation on a false Bottom. The Authors not only led the People Captive in their own Life Time, but also after their Death, like *Simon Magus*, for a long Season have bewitched the People with their Sorceries; I mean their seemingly devout, but at the Bottom Anti-Christian, Compositions.

The only Way therefore, to open People's Eyes, I think is this: To shew them that the Writings which for some Years past, have been so much admired, are directly contrary to the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, for this Reason, I thought it my Duty, to bear a publick Testimony against the Writings of Archbishop *Tillotson*;

And upon the ſame Account, think it my Duty, to point out the Fundamental Error of an Author as much admired and read by the more common, as the Archbiſhop by the more learned and polite, ſort of People.

I know you are impatient to hear, who this can be: If you will promiſe me not to be angry, I'll tell you; it is that much admir'd Book called the WHOLE DUTY OF MAN. Methinks, I ſee you ſurprized at the very mentioning of it. But remember, I deſir'd you not to be angry; and if you will throw aſide Prejudice, and are ſincerely deſirous to know and do the divine Will, I am perſuaded we ſhall be both of one Mind concerning this Book, ere you lay this Letter down out of your Hand.

But before I ſhew you its Error, to convince you of my Impartiality, I confeſs, that the Devotions of that Book, were once of Service to me: And I believe have been uſeful to many others. The Book in general, is calculated to *civilize*, but I am perſuaded it never was a Means of *converting* one ſingle Soul. I have juſt been looking over the Index and general Titles at the End of it, and cannot find the Word *Regeneration* ſo much as once mentioned; and indeed the whole Treatiſe is built on ſuch a falſe Foundation, as not only proves the Author to be no real Chriſtian at Heart: But

alſo,

alſo, that he had not ſo much as a Head-Knowledge of the true Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*. To prove this, I need only refer you to part of the Preface, *Of the Neceſſity of caring for the Soul*, (17th Paragraph) wherein the Author talking of the ſecond Covenant, ſpeaks thus: *This ſecond Covenant*, ſays he, *was made with* Adam *and us in him, preſently after his Fall, and is briefly contain'd in thoſe Words*, Gen. 3*d*, 15*th*, *where God declares, that the Seed of the Woman ſhall break the Serpent's Head; and this was made up as the Firſt was, of ſome Mercies to be afforded by God, and ſome Duties to be performed by us*. Who, that is any Way enlighten'd, cannot ſee the falſe Divinity and Fundamental Errors of this Paſſage? For how can it be proved, that the ſecond Covenant was made with *Adam*; or that God ever entered into any Covenant at all, with Man after he had broken the Firſt? It is true, he did enter into a Covenant, (and that from all Eternity,) with the ſecond *Adam*, the God-Man *Chriſt Jeſus*, in our Stead. But it cannot be proved that he made any ſecond Covenant at all with *Adam* himſelf, or any of his Poſterity. But ſays our Author; '*He did make* '*a ſecond Covenant with* Adam, *and us in* '*him, preſently after his Fall, and it is briefly* '*contained in theſe Words*, Gen. 3*d*. & 15*th*,

where

"*where God declares, that the Seed of the* "*Woman shall break the Serpent's Head.* But I would ask, where any Covenant is contained in these Words? And, how it is made up as the first was, of some Mercies to be afforded by God, and some Duties to be performed by us? Here is a *free Gift* and Promise of Salvation made to *Adam*, but no Covenant, not a Word of any Condition mentioned. No, it was the free Gift of God in *Christ*. *Adam* was now in a State of Condemnation, he was so far from being desirous of entring into Covenant with, that he fled from God, and was not so much as truly convicted of his Sin; as will evidently appear from the Context. For, both he and his Wife laid the Fault not upon *themselves*, but one *another* and the *Serpent*. *The Woman which thou gavest me*, (therein tacitly reflecting upon God, for giving him that Woman) *she gave me*, says Adam, *and I did eat*. Here appears no true Sense of Sin at all: and to shew they had no Notion of a Saviour, we are told they sewed Fig Leaves together, instead of applying to God, to cover their Nakedness; and afterwards fled from God, when they heard the Voice of the Lord God walking among the Trees in the Garden. Here then opens the Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh. Notwithstanding our first

Parents

Parents had broken the Covenant, and had their Hearts hardened; yet, out of the Riches of his *free Grace*, God had provided a Remedy from all Eternity, and now reveals it in Time. *The Seed of this Woman*, i. e. *Jesus Christ*, (who in all Probability was spiritually conceived that Instant in the Heart of *Eve*) *shall bruise the* Serpent's *Head*, *i. e.* by his Obedience and Death, shall satisfy divine Justice, fulfill the moral Law in Man's Stead, and thereby deliver him from the Power of the Devil. Here are no *Terms* mentioned, on Man's Part at all. And supposing there had been a Covenant made with Man, ' *And it had been made up as the first was, of some Mercies to be afforded by God, and some Duties to be performed by us:* Alas, we are of all Creatures the most miserable; for then we are not under *Grace*, but under the *Law*. And if *Adam* could not keep the *first* Covenant, tho' in perfect Innocence; how can we, who hate God by Nature, and whose Thoughts are only evil continually, keep a *second* like unto it? Is not this putting Man into a most unhappy Condition, and making his poor imperfect Obedience the *Cause* why *Jesus Christ* is merciful unto him? and if so, how is boasting excluded in the great Work of our Redemption, as the Scriptures every where affirm? And how can Eternal

Life

Life be the *free Gift* of God, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord? But this is agreeable enough to the Divinity of this Author, who in the Twenty-first Paragraph of his Preface says; *The Third Thing that* Christ *was to do for us, was, to enable us, or give us Strength, to do what God requires of us. This he doth, first by taking off from the Hardness of the Law given to* Adam, *which was, never to commit the least Sin upon Pain of Damnation, and requiring of us only an holy and hearty Endeavour to do what we are able, and where we fail accepting of sincere Repentance.* Now, I would fain know, where God has taken off from the Hardness of the Law given unto *Adam*? And required of us only an holy and hearty Endeavour to do what we are able? And, when we fail, accepting of sincere Repentance? This is all as false, as God is true; the whole Law is as much in Force against *us*, as it was against *Adam*, before we are found in *Christ*. God has been so far from taking off from the Hardness of the Law given to *Adam*, that *Jesus Christ* declares, that he came not to *destroy*, but to *fulfil* it. And, until convinc'd of the Obligation we lie under to obey the whole moral Law, in Thought, Word, and Deed, how can we see the Necessity of the Righteousness of *Jesus Christ*? God's Law was honourable, *Jesus*

sus Christ fulfilled it in our Stead, and upon Account of that Righteousness *imputed* to us, and not on our hearty Endeavours or Repentance, are we accepted by him. What is there in our hearty Endeavour or Repentance, to recommend us to the Favour of God, or render them worthy of being *joined* with the Righteousness of *Christ*, as tho' *that* was not sufficient in *itself*? Our best Actions are but *Splendida peccata, glittering Sins. I cannot pray*, says the pious Bishop *Beveridge, but I Sin; I cannot hear or preach a Sermon, but I Sin; I cannot give an Alms, or receive the Sacrament, but I Sin; Nay, I cannot confess my Sins, but my very Confessions are still Aggravations to them; my Repentings need to be repented of; my Tears want washing, and the very washing of my Tears, need still to be washed over again with the Blood of my Redeemer*, Jesus Christ. The Lord is our *whole* Righteousness, we are to go to him as poor Sinners. Beg Salvation of him as his *free Gift*, and entreat him to give us a living Faith, whereby that Righteousness may be applied to our Hearts; and then that Faith, if true, will work by Love. This, the Author of the WHOLE DUTY OF MAN, was wholly ignorant of, otherwise he would not have laid such a Foundation: and if the Foundation be so bad, judge you how wretchedly-

weak, the Surperſtructure muſt be. It would take more Time than I can at preſent ſpare, to point out all the Miſtakes of the whole Book: I will only refer you to what this Author ſays about Recreations, Sunday, 19th, Sec. 7th, wherein he ſeems not only to allow of Gaming, by ſaying, *if we play at any Game*, but directs us when we do it, to let *the End of our doing it be meerly to recreate ourſelves.* I thought the Glory of God, and not *ſelf-pleaſing*, had been the Principle from which all Chriſtians ought to act. I ſuppoſe from this Paſſage, a Man whom I reproved lately on the Road, for Gaming in the *Chriſtmas Holy-Days*, grounded *his* Authority for ſo doing: He told me, *the Whole Duty of Man* ſaid, he might do ſo And indeed I believe he is not the firſt by thouſands, who have been miſerably deceived, by this much applauded Book: And therefore I thought myſelf obliged to write this Letter. You may make what Uſe you will of it. I care not if the Contents are publiſhed upon the Houſe Top. Nay, I think it your Duty, if convinced yourſelf, to endeavour to convince others; for there's no Hopes of bringing People to a right Knowledge of the Goſpel, till their Favourite, tho' erroneous, Authors are diſcountenanc'd and laid aſide. Before I ſee *England*, I hope I ſhall hear that my dear Friends in the Miniſtry, both in preaching and

printing

printing have ſeconded my Teſtimony. Future Ages as well as the preſent, will be much beholden to them for it. Their Declarations will ſtand as Records that God did not leave himſelf without Witneſs, even in the Worſt of times. Other Goſpel-Miniſters will be much encourag'd thereby; and thouſands, nay, ten thouſands preſerved from Infection, which otherwiſe perhaps they may not be able avoid. However, whether they ſecond me or not, by the Help of my God, both abroad and at Home, (if it be the Divine Will I ſhould ſee *England* again) I will perſevere in bearing a more explicite and particular Teſtimony againſt the falſe Writings of our admired *Rabbies*. Do you and my other Friends watch over me; reprove me ſharply whenever you perceive my Spirit embitter'd. Pray that I may be as meek as a Lamb, and as bold as a Lion; and then whatever befalls me for ſpeaking as I ought to ſpeak, through divine Grace ſhall be chearfully ſubmitted to by

Your affectionate Friend
and Servant
in Chriſt.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.